

# Letter from Taizé

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## Trust on earth and human solidarity

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*The underlying realities sought during the meetings at Taizé are the living springs of faith, and we seek them in the common prayer, the bible introductions and the meetings in small groups. Towards the end of the week a workshop entitled "Trust on earth and human solidarity" gives the opportunity for people to share experiences from their own involvement. Here are some echoes from this workshop over the summer.*



For people who follow the news, the theme can be discouraging. The questions of how to establish trust between people on the earth and of the just distribution of wealth are so vast that one can feel immediately out of one's depth. The problems raised are so numerous and complex that they can overwhelm us: "It's not for me. I'm not a specialist. I can't even manage a general overview of all the questions involved. I have neither the financial means to answer the needs nor the political power to change the structures that surely do need changing. Aren't there people who are qualified, political leaders for example, and international organizations whose job it is? What can I do?" And as one has plenty of personal cares and worries one often prefers to dismiss these concerns as being probably beyond one. Sometimes therefore, our undertakings are limited to the personal domain: studies, family, work – with a field of vision that remains narrow.

How can we have a wide vision without reducing our sense of urgency. How can we be daring enough to leave questions open and face them with the very small resources we have? Sometimes a courageous imagination or movement of generosity that looks unrealistic has changed the course of events despite all forecasts to the contrary!

While it is important that some people work on studies and analyses that are as far-reaching as possible, it is essential too that one's own life be a clear sign of commitment. In order to awaken hope and break out of the vicious circle of apathy, starting with one's own life is a fundamental step.

## PILGRIMS

"The experience of reconciliation which young people from all over the world have at Taizé will bear fruit later, because everyone has taken a seed away with them to sow in their own ground." These words of Edward from Uganda pose a question for us: What seed can we plant? How can we advance trusting in the hidden force that such a seed contains?

At the end of December, over 20,000 people will be setting off for Rome. Among them will be young people from India, the Philippines, South Africa, Chile and from other countries of the southern hemisphere. The weeks leading up to the European Meeting are a valuable time of preparation for the pilgrimage to be meaningful when it happens. Those in Rome who are getting ready to welcome the participants are thinking about what they have which is important to share. A question which has been used as a focus for preparation is "How can our fellowship, our communion together in Christ, come closer to the picture of merciful love which we see in Christ?"

To be a pilgrim entails having an inward attitude of listening and availability to those one meets and also to the Word of God. The suggestion this year of "Johannine Hours" has been a stimulus for inner pilgrimage. Some people have started holding them at home, adapting them to the situation in which they live where it is not always easy to find time for silence or the possibility of gathering as a group. In some cases, the sharing of reflections has been done by letter!

Europeans who are working to invite one or more young adults from other continents have very often found this an opportunity to make contact with others around them: it provides an occasion to undertake little "pilgrimages" in their own town.



# Trust on earth and human solidarity

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What radical choice to simplify can one make — and doing so not by austerity but so as to be more open and available? What does an “option for the poor” imply for one’s own life? What priorities should one choose for one’s time and activities? How can one keep the time open to welcome what comes? — Many people are “overworked” by so many meetings that they don’t have any time to welcome something that arises unexpectedly, or the people around them.

Those who are studying can ask themselves what training or specialization to follow so as to acquire skills to enable them to work in areas which respond to a real need.

Many are conscious that the building of peace starts around one, there where one lives.

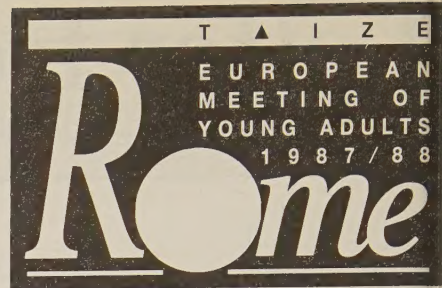
In the places where we live, what are the first steps to take in order to stimulate trust between people who are distant or indifferent to each other? Who is left out? Who suffers from some form of violence or humiliation? What is already being done for these situations, how can we contribute our efforts?

What intercontinental initiatives can we take? — What can be done to awaken both children and adults to a human solidarity which does not involve excluding others? What acts can express our hope for trust between the nations of the South and the North and between East and West?

Europeans can welcome people from other continents who are staying for a time in their town; students for example, who are staying for several years. When they return to their countries they will have responsibilities in the development of their countries. Many of them are believers, some are Christians. Will they have been able to discover much of the local community where they have been studying? Sometimes they can return to their countries after four or five years study having scarcely met a family, although family life is very important for them. How can the treasures of faith and humanity they have been discovered?

Many Europeans support development projects in countries of the southern hemisphere. Some use their holiday time to go to work with their partners on these projects. Why not also invite people from the southern continents to come to experience daily life in Europe. It would be a way for them to realize the problems which exist even in countries where minimum life necessities are guaranteed. At the same time they would see signs of hope and meet people of hope — people who give their lives for others. And links of solidarity would grow stronger and more immediate across the oceans.

During the meetings, suggestions which have been made regarding the questions for the UN were discussed in small groups with a view to formulating them afresh.



## A prayer for Advent

*Advent is a time when many people gather to pray, and these suggestions here could be used then. After Christmas there will be prayers of departure as peoples from towns all over Europe set off for the European Meeting. Such a prayer can be held with friends, family, people from the local church and all those who are sending the participants. These elements given here can also be suitable for this prayer.*

## In Rome,

*the meetings with others will be more valuable if each participant has prepared at home beforehand.*

*Here are questions and ideas that parishes in Rome are seeking to put into practice as a preparation for the European Meeting. They could also be adopted by those who are going to go to the meeting.*

— How can I renew my personal prayer, and the prayer of my group or parish?

— What contact can we make between the different groups in my parish, or the different Christian groups in my neighbourhood, so as to truly form one body (1 Corinthians 12.13)?

— What families in the parish can I visit, perhaps with an icon, to pray together and to help the families to be homes of welcome?

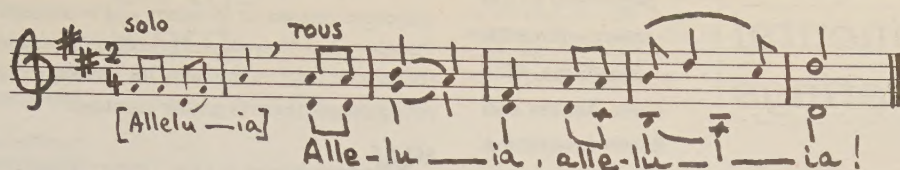
— Can I go to visit people who suffer in my neighbourhood, even though I have no answer to their suffering? Who is already doing this and is a sign of hope?

— How can we approach those who appear to be indifferent to belief? How can we be perseverant in our contact with them?

— By simple acts of friendship, can we express that in the Church we participate in a communion that is universal (in particular through our contact with those of other religions and cultures)?



# A P R A Y E R F O R A D V E N T



## SONG

At the beginning and end of the prayer, songs as Confitemini Domino, Bonum est confidere, Cantate Domino, Magnificat, Ostende nobis, Exaltabo te can be used.

## PSALM 72

This Advent Psalm announces Christ's coming, using the picture of a king who brings peace and justice to those in his care. "Alleluia!" can be sung between the verses as they are sung or read.

O God, give your judgment to the King,  
make your righteousness his guide;  
he will rule your people with right,  
and with justice the poor.

Mountains and hills, give your fruit:  
his peace on all;  
the cause of the poor he will defend,  
and deliver those in need.

May he endure as the sun and the moon,  
age after age;  
he shall come down like rain on the fields,  
like showers on the grass.

He will rescue the needy when they call,  
he will lift up the poor;  
full of pity for the humble and meek,  
he will keep them from death.

From violence and oppression they are safe,  
their blood is precious in his sight!  
They will ever be praying for his good,  
May God bless him today!

Abundance of grain on the earth,  
his fame, like the sun;  
in him all peoples shall be blessed,  
they will bless him in turn.

All praise to the Lord, Israel's God,  
he alone does these deeds;  
and blessed be the glory of his name,  
may it cover the earth.

## READING

Mark 1.1-8; Luke 1.26-38; Luke 2.1-14; Luke 2.22-35; 1 Thessalonians 5.16-24; ... After the reading, children can light an oil lamp or candles while all sing a hymn or chant to Christ, Light of the world.

## SILENCE

## CONTEMPLATION OF CHRIST

Prayer intentions can be made after each verse, singing Kyrie Eleison after each.

Jesus, Gate of praise,  
you offer an opening in the maze of human despair  
to unite the lost with those who live,  
by your Incarnation  
you knock at the door in anticipation of our longing.

Let us pray for all the peoples of the earth, and particularly for those who live with the threat of hunger or of war.

Jesus, Light of life,  
you brighten, when sought alone  
and transform loneliness into joyful trust,  
by your Transfiguration  
you reveal the horizon of our journey.

Let us pray for those in prison, for the sick and for those who are lonely.

Jesus, Gaze of compassion,  
you descend into the abyss of the human condition  
to be with those who daily need a new beginning,  
by your Passion  
you mark us with the fire of your forgiveness.

Let us pray for the Church: that she may be, for all people, a sign of forgiveness and unity.

Jesus, eternal love,  
you are deeply moved at human death  
and come to vanquish death and fill us with life,  
by your Resurrection  
you engender us to your boundless love.

Let us pray for those who place their lives at the service of others.

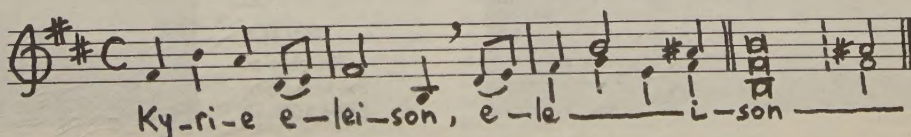
Jesus, River of living water,  
you rise to meet us on our abandoned shores,  
by the Spirit of promise  
you make our land fertile,  
you raise an abundant harvest for your people

Let us pray for us to advance with confident trust along our road with Christ.

## PRAYER

Christ of communion,  
waiting for you in the peace of our nights and in the silence of our days, in creation's beauty as at times of great inner struggle, is being with you, in the desert and also on the mountain of the Transfiguration.

And there you let us be open for your Spirit, resting like dew upon the wonder of our life. You know our thirst, you who are becoming, little by little, our one essential love. (Prayer by Brother Roger)





# Inter-continental meetings

## Echoes from Zaire

(CONT. ON P. 7)

"In the evening, after a good day's work, a family joins the other villagers under the baobab tree and their little dog comes too..." With hundreds of pairs of eyes gazing at him, John-Bosco, a young youth leader from the diocese of Lubumbashi continues his story and it is as if we ourselves are under the African sun... "Suddenly a gazelle passes by! And the dog sets off in pursuit, soon followed by all the other dogs of the neighbourhood, alerted by all the noise and the cloud of dust. After a time some give up, no longer able to see what they are chasing. In the end, just one of them catches the gazelle." The story teller breaks off, looks around and asks: "Which one do you think?" Some play the game and call out:

- "The fastest one?"
- "The strongest?"
- "The chief's dog?"
- "The dog that first saw the gazelle?"

"Yes, you're right," John-Bosco goes on to explain his story, "there are many who are looking, but what counts is to really want to catch up with Christ. Some people come to church out of habit or because they see others coming, and, in the end, they are likely to become discouraged and give up. What counts is making it to the end." There is thunderous applause from all sides. And we discover the gift, that seems inbred in Africans, of communicating something serious while involving an audience with an animal story or parable from everyday life.

The thing that strikes one most about the Africans and particularly those from Zaire, is the dynamism of their local communities. In Zaire, as in many countries of the Third World, the Church is faced by huge difficulties and is poor in both resources and priests. Victor, who comes from a rural community, explained that in his district there is one priest

At 5pm each day since the beginning of the intercontinental meetings, Africans, Asians and South Americans have told of their countries.

for 4 parishes and 48 Christian communities. There are 13 'animators', mostly young adults. He works every morning on the farming cooperative which a group of them have formed. In the afternoon he leads catechism classes on Mondays and Wednesdays, and youth groups on Tuesdays and Thursdays. He is also the animator of the local Christian community, and in addition he travels round other villages to help young people there to gather together.

"We have chosen to form 'Living Church Communities'. In this way, we have discovered that the life of the Church is first of all our daily life in our streets and neighbourhoods. So every week there is a meeting in each neighbourhood to analyse the reality of our life: who we are, what we have, what we are doing. And we try to understand why we live in the way we do. Then we go onto the next step: if we have accomplished something good, what is it that allowed us to do it; if we had made mistakes, what were we lacking? And we refer to our own traditions which have been handed down from our ancestors. When that has been done, we try to understand everything in the light of the Gospel.

You can also see how the Church has been attentive to traditions in the way the liturgy has been renewed. Over the last few years, Christians in Zaire have introduced many elements and symbols from African culture. For example, in our liturgy, the penitential rite is placed after the reading of the Gospel and the sermon, because in our tradition when there is a problem in the village, it is after explaining the question at length under the palaver tree in the presence of the chief that forgiveness is asked for and a reconciliation occurs. And when this happens, there is no vote, nor majority and minority: everyone has to be in agreement. In Zaire, we use a lot of gestures in our prayer. We also sing a lot, and when it's a song of praise no one stays with their arms folded: everyone sings and dances and the whole church vibrates!"

In Zaire, a country four times as big as France, where there are more than 200 different ethnic groups, the Church is also the only community where people meet across all barriers in trust. "For example," explained a young person from Kinshasa, the capital, "in the 'Living Church Communities' people from different tribes come together — something that would have been impossible for our parents to imagine. Now, it is even possible, with one's family's consent, to marry someone who is not from one's own tribe. The Church has done a lot for this progress towards unity, but there are still many problems that need to be tackled. A lot of young people want greater justice and have organized local Justice and Peace groups. We also need more people to show their commitment to the Gospel at all levels of political life."



Each week, paintings representing bible texts were painted on large pieces of fabric:

**AFRICA**  
The Christian community,  
Acts 2.46-47

**INDIA**  
Parable of the lost coin,  
Luke 15.8-10





# Meditating on the word

*These short readings, taken from the midday prayer in Taizé, can be read several times during the day. The references indicate longer readings. If you have time to read only one, the one in bold type is suggested.*

January

God does not want to be without us. The whole life of Jesus attests the truth of this; his whole life bears witness to the importance which the Father, in his sovereign freedom, attaches to our world. What John expresses solemnly: "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish, but may have eternal life", conveyed in the first three gospels through images, gestures and symbols which share one anxious concern: regaining something of incalculable worth. The shepherd will not rest until he has found the lost missing sheep (Luke 15.4). The man who has lost a valuable thing spares no effort in her thorough search (Luke 15.8). Jesus embodies these parables. Isn't this the secret of his meals with the sinners? and, even more, of his visit to Zacchaeus (Luke 19.1-10)? Jesus insists on going to visit Zacchaeus, it is because Zacchaeus is in some way a symbol of that which is lost (v.10), already written by his fellows. And it is this that Jesus cannot accept, whence his words: "I must stay at your house today" (Luke 19.5). God does not want to be without us.

God is not far from us. The first page of St. Matthew's gospel reveals, by a long list of names, the story in which Jesus will take part. A history like all history, like our own: teeming with contradictions, failures, joys, trials, hopes and ambiguities. God does not fear the complexity of our story, any more than he feared that of the Samaritan woman with her five husbands (John 4), or that of Matthew the tax collector, or that of Zacchaeus who had extorted so many things from others during his life that he no longer knew whom he had cheated (Luke 19.8). "The Word became flesh" (John 1.14), through Christ, God has entered the world never before into the fabric of human history. He has let himself be touched in human flesh and, from this point on, it is through the wounds of Christ Crucified that God tells us how much he is with us.

God is not against us. God is with us. Hear the promise of kindness, of which Jesus is the sign and the token, and which is sung at the night of his birth: "Peace on earth and God's favour" (Luke 1.14). Evil and suffering can no longer be interpreted as punishments. While we do not understand their whole meaning, we know that God is with us in the struggle against them. And for the one who opens his ear to listen, the reply is given: "I will hear what the Lord has to say. What does God say?" (Ps 85.9).

Emmanuel, God-with-us" — how can this name of Christ help us understand what human life presents in the eyes of God?

**1 Fri** Isaiah 32.15-20  
**Mark 10.17-27**  
John writes: God's love for us has been shown in this way: God sent his only Son into the world that we might have life through him.  
1 John 4.7-12

**2 Sat** Is 50.4-10  
Hebrews 12.1-2  
The risen Jesus appeared to his disciples and said: Go, make disciples of all nations. And surely I am with you always, to the end of time.  
**Matthew 28.16-20**

**3 SUN** Sirach 24.1-2,8-12  
John 1.1-9  
God chose us in Christ before the world was made, to be holy and faultless before him in love.  
**Ephesians 1.3-18**

**4 Mon** Genesis 1.1-5  
Jn 1.9-13  
Paul writes: Am I seeking to please human beings? If I were still doing that I should not be a servant of Christ.  
**Galatians 1.1-10**

**5 Tue** Gn 1.26-27  
Ga 1.11-24  
The Word became flesh and lived among us. From his fullness we have all received.  
**Jn 1.14-18**

**6 Wed** Is 60.1-6  
Eph 3.1-6  
**EPIPHANY OF THE LORD**  
At the sight of the star, the wise men were filled with a great joy. Going into the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they knelt down and worshipped him.  
**Mt 2.1-12**

**7 Thu** Gn 1.31-2.3  
Mt 2.13-23  
Paul writes: It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.  
**Ga 2.16-21**

**8 Fri** Gn 2.4b-7  
Ga 3.1-9  
As it is written in the book of Isaiah, "Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight his ways", John the Baptist was in the desert announcing a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.  
**Mark 1.1-6**

**9 Sat** Gn 8.1-12  
John the Baptist saw Jesus coming towards him and said: there is the lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world.  
**Jn 1.29-34**

**10 SUN** Is 42.1-7  
Mk 1.7-11  
Peter said: I now really understand that God has no favourites but accepts people of every nation who revere him and do what is right.  
**Acts 10.34-38**

**11 Mon** Gn 9.11-16  
Mk 1.9-13  
Paul writes: You are all children of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus.  
**Ga 3.23-29**

**12 Tue** Gn 12.1-7  
Ga 4.1-7  
Jesus said to his first disciples, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of people." And at once they left their nets and followed him.  
**Mk 1.14-20**

**13 Wed** Gn 13.1-18  
Mk 1.21-28  
Paul writes: Let yourselves be guided by the Spirit and you will not be under the Law.  
**Ga 5.1,13-18**

**14 Thu** Gn 15.1-6  
Mk 1.35-39  
Paul writes: Since we live by the Spirit, let our behaviour be guided by the Spirit.  
**Ga 5.22-25**

**15 Fri** Gn 18.1-15  
**Ga 6.1-5**  
A leper came to Jesus and said, "If you are willing, you can cleanse me." Jesus, filled with compassion, stretched out his hand, touched him and said, "I am willing. Be clean!"  
Mk 1.40-45

**16 Sat** Mk 2.1-12  
The Lord says: I am with you, I will watch over you wherever you go. I will not abandon you before I have accomplished what I have promised.  
Gn 28.12-17

**17 SUN** 1 Samuel 3.3-19  
**Jn 1.35-42**  
Paul writes: Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you and whom you received from God.  
1 Corinthians 6.13-15,17-20

**18 Mon** Gn 32.23-31  
Mk 2.13-17  
Let us not become tired of doing good; the harvest will come in good time if we persevere.  
**Ga 6.6-10**

**19 Tue** Gn 50.15-21  
Mk 2.18-22  
Paul writes: May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
Ga 6.14-18

**20 Wed** Jonah 2.2-10  
Mk 2.23-3.6  
The promises of God have been given us so that we may share the very nature of God.  
**2 Peter 1.1-4**

**21 Thu** 2 P 1.5-11  
Mk 3.7-19  
Seek the Lord with simplicity of heart; for God reveals himself to those who trust in him without putting him to the test and to those who do not refuse to trust in him.  
**Wisdom 1.1-5**

**22 Fri** 2 P 1.12-16  
Mk 3.20-27  
God did not make death, he takes no pleasure in the destruction of the living. He has created all things for life.  
**Ws 1.7,12-15**

**23 Sat** Ws 2.23, 3.1-5a  
Jesus said: Whoever does the will of God is a brother, a sister and a mother to me.  
**Mk 3.31-35**

**24 SUN** 1 Cor 7.29-31  
Mk 1.14-20  
The Lord says: Is that the sort of fast that pleases me: a day when a person inflicts pain on himself? Is it not rather this which is a fast that pleases me: to break unjust fetters, to set free the oppressed and to share your food with the hungry?  
**Is 58.5-9a**

**25 Mon** Ws 3.5b-9  
Mk 4.1-9  
You do well to pay attention to the words of the prophets, as to a light shining in a dark place, until day begins to dawn and the morning star rises in your hearts.  
2 Pet 1.17-21

**26 Tue** Ws 5.15-16  
2 Pet 3.3-4,8-9  
Jesus said in a parable: There are those who, like seeds sown in good soil, listen to the Word of God, receive it and bear much fruit.  
**Mk 4.13-20**

**27 Wed** Ws 6.10-16  
Mk 4.21-24  
Make every effort to be found in peace. Understand that the great patience of God is for your salvation.  
**2 Peter 3.13-18**

**28 Thu** Ws 7.7-10,15-16  
Mk 4.26-29  
Jesus Christ is the faithful witness, the First-born from among the dead. He loves us and has washed away our sins.  
**Revelation 1.4-8**

**29 Fri** Ws 7.21-26  
Rev 1.17-18  
Jesus said: The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of seeds, but when sown it grows into the biggest of all garden plants.  
**Mk 4.30-34**

**30 Sat** Mk 4.35-41  
God's wisdom renews the universe. From one generation to the next she passes into souls to make them friends of God.  
**Ws 7.27-8.1**

**31 SUN** Deuteronomy 18.15-18  
**Mk 1.21-28**  
Paul writes: Christ Jesus was never Yes-and-No; his nature is all Yes. For in him is found the Yes to all God's promises.  
2 Cor 1.18-22



## Meditating on the word

*Johannine hours are suggested as a way of seeking God in silence and prayer, in the midst of our life at home. During the course of the day (if possible, two days in the same week) take a couple of hours to read the Bible passages with the short commentary and to reflect on the questions which follow. Afterwards, the group (3 to 10 people) meet together to share what they have discovered and perhaps for a time of prayer.*

## Johannine Hours

NO ONE IS UNWELCOME

**1 Mon** Revel 2.1-7 Mk 5.18-24  
Wisdom 8.21-9.5  
I lift up eyes to the hills: where is my help to come from? My help comes from the Lord who has made heaven and earth.

Psalm 121

**2 Tue** Malachi 3.1-4  
Luke 2.22-40  
**PRESENTATION OF THE LORD**  
Because Christ himself suffered when he was put to the test, he is able to help those who are being put to the test. **Hebrews 2.14-18**

**3 Wed** Ws 9.11-18  
Mk 5.25-34  
The Lord says: I know your hardships and your poverty, yet you are rich: do not be afraid of suffering, stay faithful until death and I will give you the crown of life.

Rev 2.8-10

**4 Thu** Rev 3.7-8, 11-12  
Mk 5.35-43  
You are merciful to all, Lord, because you are almighty. You overlook people's sins, so that they can repent. You love everything that exists. **Ws 11.22-12.2**

**5 Fri** Job 1.20-22  
Mk 6.1-13  
John writes: I heard a loud voice calling, "God will make his home among human beings, they will be his people, and he will be their God."

Rev 21.1-4

**6 Sat** Jb 2.1-10  
Jesus saw a large crowd and he took pity on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and he began to teach them at length. **Mk 6.30-34**

**7 SUN** 1 Cor 9.16-19, 22-23  
Mk 1.29-39  
Thus says the Lord: Look, I am doing something new, already it is emerging; can you not see it? Yes, I am making a road in the desert. And my people will sing my praises. **Isaiah 43.18-21**

**8 Mon** Jb 6.11-21  
Mk 6.35-44  
God says: I am the Beginning and the End. I will give water from the spring of life free to anyone who is thirsty. **Rev 21.5-7**

**9 Tue** Jb 12.4-5, 13.1-8  
Rev 21.10-11, 22-25  
When they saw Jesus walking on the water, the disciples were terrified. But at once he spoke to them saying, "Have courage, it's me. Do not be afraid." **Mk 6.45-52**

**10 Wed** Jb 16.16-22  
Mk 7.31-37  
The servants of God will see him face to face and his name will be written on their foreheads. And night will be abolished; they will not need the light of the sun or a lamp, for the Lord God will be shining upon them. **Rev 22.1-5, 8-9**

**11 Thu** 1 Timothy 1.1-2, 12-17  
Mk 8.11-21  
Job said: I know that my redeemer lives. From my flesh I shall look on God and the one on whom I look will be no stranger. **Jb 19.23-27**

**12 Fri** Jb 23.3-12  
Mk 8.27-33  
God wants everyone to be saved and to reach full knowledge of the truth. **1 Tim 2.1-8**

**13 Sat** Jb 28.12-28  
Jesus said: Anyone who wants to save their life will lose it; but anyone who loses their life for my sake, and for the sake of the Gospel, will save it. **Mk 8.34-37**

**14 SUN** Hosea 2.16-17, 20-22  
Mk 1.40-45  
Paul writes: Whatever you do, do everything to the glory of God. **1 Cor 10.31-11.1**

**15 Mon** Jb 42.1-5  
1 Tim 3.14-16  
Jesus was transfigured in the presence of his disciples. And a cloud covered them in its shadow; and from the cloud a voice came saying, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him." **Mk 9.1-10**

**16 Tue** Jeremiah 1.4-10  
Mk 9.14-29  
Paul writes: Train yourself to live in godliness: it holds out promise both for the present life and the life to come. **1 Tim 4.4-11**

**17 Wed** Joel 2.12-18  
2 Cor 5.20-6.2  
**ASH WEDNESDAY**  
Jesus said: When you fast, put scent on your head and wash your face so that no one will know you are fasting except your Father who sees what is done in secret. **Matthew 6.1-6, 16-18**

**18 Thu** Jr 1.11-12, 17-19  
Mk 9.33-37  
Paul wrote to Timothy: Do not neglect the spiritual gift which is in you. **1 Tim 4.12-5.2**

**19 Fri** Jr 2.1-5  
1 Tim 6.3-10  
Jesus said: If anyone gives you a glass of water to drink because you belong to Christ, in truth, they will not lose their reward. **Mk 9.38-41, 50**

**20 Sat** Mk 10.13-16  
The Lord said of his people: They have forsaken me, the fount of living water and have dug themselves cracked cisterns that will not hold water. **Jr 2.10-13**

**21 SUN** Genesis 9.8-15  
1 Peter 3.18-22  
After the temptation in the desert, Jesus came proclaiming the Gospel of God. He said: The time has come, the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe the good news of the Gospel. **Mk 1.12-15**

**22 Mon** Jr 3.12-17  
1 Tim 6.11-16  
Jesus said to a rich man: You lack one thing. Go, sell everything you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me. **Mk 10.17-27**

**23 Tue** 1 Tim 6.17-21  
Mk 10.28-34  
The Lord says: Walk in the way of good and you will find rest for your souls. **Jr 6.14-16**

**24 Wed** Jr 7.1-7  
2 Tim 1.1-5  
Jesus said: The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many. **Mk 10.35-45**

**25 Thu** Jr 7.22-25  
Mk 10.46-52  
Paul wrote to Timothy: God did not give us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of inward strength and love and self-control. **2 Tim 1.6-9a**

**26 Fri** Jr 8.4-7  
Mk 11.1-11  
Paul writes: Keep as your pattern the sound teaching you have heard in faith and the love of Christ Jesus. With the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us, look after that precious thing given in trust. **2 Tim 1.9b-14**

**27 Sat** Jr 8.18-23  
Mk 11.15-19  
I said to God: Here, I am coming. In the book it is written of me: My delight is to do your will; your law, my God, is deep in my heart. **Psalm 40**

**28 SUN** Gn 22.1-2, 9-18  
Mk 9.2-10  
Who could condemn us? Christ Jesus, who died, — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God, interceding for us. **Romans 8.31-34**

**29 Mon** 2 Tim 2.1-7  
Mk 11.22-25  
God says: I am the Lord who acts with faithful love, rightness and justice on earth. Yes, these are what please me. **Jr 9.22-23**

What did Jesus' way of looking convey for the Gospels to attain such importance to it? We are often reminded of it at decisive moments before some action or call: "Jesus was walking on from there: I saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collectors' booth, and said to him, 'Follow me'" (Mt 9.9). "When he reached the spot, Jesus looked up and spoke to him, 'Zacchaeus, come down quickly, because I am to stay at your house today.'" (Lk 19.5) "Andrew told Simon to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, 'You are Simon, son of John, you are to be called Cephas — which means Rock.'" (Jn 1.42)

Would it be that Jesus sees as others does? Capturing the appeal of secret distress, the hope and expectation of the one who is excluded from the truth of the human heart and that preoccupies it, his sight is keen in a different way. It is true: Jesus does not see as we do. His looking is not like that of Simon Peter who, obsessed by his own sin, could not see anything else (cf. Lk 5.8). In the man Jesus discerns someone of the Kingdom, a "fisher of people" (Lk 5.10). In Zacchaeus (Lk 19.1-10) whom the crowd has already put in a category and rejected, Jesus sees a man eager to welcome him and ready to be extraordinarily generous.

Jesus is more clear-sighted than Simon the Pharisee who has invited him for a meal (Lk 7.36-50). Yet it is Simon who thinks he sees clearly. He at least knows who the woman is who has just entered his house and what she is: "When this Pharisee saw this, he said to himself: 'If this man were a prophet, I would know who this woman is and what kind of a person it is that is touching him — a sinner'" (Lk 7.39). It is upon his way of looking that Jesus questions Simon the Pharisee. "You see this woman?" (Lk 7.44) "Have you really seen her?" Has Simon perceived the meaning of her act, the truth of his heart? Christ alone sees all the depth of reality. He alone has really seen the woman. For him, seeing never means judging people on the past, but it is discerning with joy the present day that God is creating in them, and enabling them to enter upon it. Seeing, for him, is synonymous with hoping and setting free.

"In my Father's house there are many rooms...I am going to prepare you a place." (Jn 14.2) Though the text does not mention how Jesus sees, does it not say exactly what his way of looking is throughout the Gospel? When it rests on someone his gaze says: There is room for you. I want you to live. Under his gaze no one is unwelcome.

Why does Christ's way of looking give life? How can we learn from Christ's way of looking to be clear-sighted in a new way?



to introduce the Philippines to you, I will tell you a Filipino story: There was once a very beautiful land in South-East Asia. This land was divided into two parts, a rich part and a poor part. In the rich part, where the volcanoes and the water springs are, there lives a "Datu" who is a king, the native king of the Philippines. The king has a very beautiful garden in which there is a very beautiful bamboo tree. The bamboo, as you know, is a very green, straight plant when young, and when it is old it turns golden. The bamboo is the king's favourite plant and very proud of itself. It is a majestic plant. It is very high. When the wind blows it will not break because it knows how to bend. When the sun shines it reflects its green colour. The Datu and the bamboo talk to each other every morning because they are very good friends. One morning the Datu came to the bamboo and said, "I will ask of you one thing." The proud bamboo replied, "You have given me everything, you can ask anything of me." The Datu said, "I want to break your branches." The bamboo was shocked because he couldn't imagine himself without his branches. Even the sun became very quiet. The wind stopped blowing and the butterflies stopped flying beside him. The bamboo said, "Why do you want to break my branches?" But the king did not answer, he just said, "I will be more useful if I break your branches." The bamboo, who started crying, said, "Alright, I will give away my branches." The next morning the king came again and asked him another favour. The bamboo, who was no longer happy, said, "Yes, what do you want?" The king said, "I want to cut your stem." The bamboo said, "I can't understand why you want to cut me whom you love." The king answered, "It will serve a better purpose." The bamboo said, "Alright, cut me in two." The king then made a water pipe of the bamboo and used it to transfer water from the rich land to the poor land. When the water flowed through the bamboo, he was very happy because he was important. After some time the dry land became fertile and rice began to grow there. When the job was finished the bamboo was put to rest in the corner. And then the bamboo felt a different kind of happiness because of having been broken.

That is the whole story of the broken bamboo and I guess it tells a lot about the character and life of the Filipino people. We come from a very rich land. It has many islands, many rivers, many seas, many mountains. But it is not only a country of riches: it has its problems. Three qualities of the bamboo are found in Filipinos: they are resilient and know how to bend and adapt, which I think is the reason we were colonised by many countries without much problem. Secondly Filipinos have a big faith, like the relationship between the Datu and the bamboo: even if they do not understand many things, they accept many things. Thirdly, Filipinos know very much how to suffer. There is a prayer in the Philippines which says, "We can only love to the extent we can suffer." We have been asked how the revolution happened. It was a combination of faith and solidarity. The people like to call it not the revolution, but the miracle of Edse. Edse being an avenue in Manila. For many Christians Micah 4.3 is very important and it expressed the feelings of the people at that time: "They will hammer their words into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks..." There were seminars on active non-violence by people from international communities. Groups of students, young people and old people were involved. In the churches prayers were being said by both Catholics and Protestants. I want to emphasize these aspects because, though many people know what happened politically, these things were never seen by the politicians and economists and all who were trying to predict what would happen to the country. That was why they were never able to predict a peaceful revolution."



## BACK HOME...

### ... in Zimbabwe

"There has been an inner healing in me. When I came, I was feeling loaded, and I unloaded at Taizé. I met people I never knew before from all over the world and especially I met white people from my own country and from South Africa who are working for reconciliation and against apartheid. My experience has given me encouragement about the future of our country, Zimbabwe, and for South Africa, because all races sit, discuss and share everything: the future I long for in Southern Africa."

### ... in Kenya

"At Taizé I was surprised to note that there are some young people who have no knowledge of God and his plan of salvation. With childlike innocence, some university students could ask what it is that we believe. When you mention Jesus who was crucified, died and rose again, you are met not only with disbelief but also astonishment. I was puzzled by the fact that some people could go through the whole education system without anybody mentioning the Word of God to them. I found myself in the shoes of a catechist. I had to explain the basics of our Christian faith not to small children but to adults with established ways of thinking but who nevertheless wanted to know and were very honest about their ignorance. Are we called to bear witness to the developed world which has seen its faith dwindle?"

### ... in India

from Raichur: "What really touched me in Taizé was the simple way of living. After coming back to Raichur, I had three meetings arranged with different groups to share my experience. We also had prayer services and bible study, and they wanted more prayer services like that, which I think we will do."

from Goa: "My visit to a group in Madrid was simple and yet very joyful. In the sharing, living, praying and even in the eating together was there a great feeling of brotherhood and solidarity in the Church. Though our programme was so simple, the experience was deep and marvellous and this perhaps made me understand what simplicity is. At Taizé the development of my relationship with God was so interesting that at times I said to myself I enjoy it and I want more of it. This was very much encouraged by and guided by my prayer with the community and alone. Living in the church was like living with God and when I was outside it was like loving him with all the joy and trust, and with all the possible means that he has entrusted to me."

from Mysore: "During the last six years, this was the first occasion I got to be quiet by myself for two weeks. My stay in Taizé has been very fruitful for me personally, specially to renew my commitment." ■

## MEXICO

"Carry one  
another's burdens."  
Galatians 6.2

## HONG-KONG

"Go first  
and be reconciled..."  
Matthew 5.23-24







## Listening to the CONTINENTS

### CHILE

"Chile is suffering. It is suffering and there are many signs of death: exile, torture, extremisms, hate that poisons people's hearts, social injustice, lack of freedom and truth.

In the face of the violent situation at all levels in our country, the Church has become involved and gives concrete answers. When young people see the Church in Chile and other South American countries they feel that there must be some way of living out a deep faith together with a deep social commitment.

Our Church plays an important role because she has opted for the poor and has become involved with people's day-to-day problems. She participates in grass-roots associations with names like 'Open Table', 'Cooperative Purchase', 'Meals Together' and 'Building Together'. The Church plays a role of reconciliation. She takes part in initiatives for national understanding in which the political, economic, and social aspirations are used for the good of Chile, not for the interests of one particular group.

Some young Chileans who have chosen active non-violence are bearers of hope. They are trying to change people's hearts through what people experience and by expressing what they want publicly. They denounce, but they also announce that they want a country that is different and free. And this is their slogan: "They can tear up the flowers but they cannot stop the springtime that is coming!"

Non-violent protest is carried on by demonstrations using symbols like plain white banners and flowers. Carmen Gloria Quintana who, with other young people, was set on fire and who survived, is a living example of forgiveness and love. Instead of saying words of hate and violence against the military, she has had the strength to continue her work with young people and with the poor." □

#### Just published:

**MARY, MOTHER OF RECONCILIATIONS**  
(Mowbray)

*A short book with meditations on Mary, written by Mother Teresa and Brother Roger together.*

### ITALY

A Filipino visits Italy — "Being able to visit the two parishes in Genoa which had invited me to Europe and to Taizé was a big boost for me. They had prepared a 21 day programme for me. It is a city bounded by the mountains on one side and the sea on the other. Most of the people are rich and they own flats in big buildings. I went to both the richest and the poorest districts, and visited families and church groups. We shared experiences, our problems and difficulties and also our hopes. Most of all, I admired the people I met who try to persevere in their Christian ideals despite the difficult moral reality of the society in which they live. For me, these people are real signs of hope. Meeting them was an inspiration: there was an atmosphere of wanting to listen and to share in what we live for. I remember during their welcome prayer for me, a boy read a passage from a book that said how it is important for a community to know how to welcome not only strangers but also its own members. I was struck by this and I realized the value of my visit to them." □

The community has asked a different company to take over the regular coach service between London and Taizé. Easter, Spring and Summer 1988, coaches will be run by:

**St Peter's Tours, 4 Penerley Road,  
LONDON SE6 2LQ.**

Telephone: 01 698 3788 — Telex: 268506 PETERS

### Gatherings in Britain January-February 1988

- Each gathering will include a common prayer, a meeting all together, small groups, and activities for children (who are particularly welcome). Some of the afternoon meetings will also include visits and the opportunity of a period of personal silence.
- Two brothers will come from Taizé to take part.
- Some meetings include a shared meal for those who wish to come early: there will be soup, tea & coffee; bring sandwiches etc. to share.
- Before coming to one of these regional gatherings you are invited to undertake a small local "pilgrimage" in your own town on one of these two themes: Inner life and Human Solidarity. The contact people will be happy to hear your plans and help with suggestions.

#### Scotland

- Thu 4 Feb CUPAR: 7.30pm St John's Church, Bonnygate. Mike Shilton (0337) 30902
- Fri 5 Feb GLASGOW: 7.30pm St Mungo's parish, 52 Parson St, Townhead, G4. Gerry O'Farrell (0236) 63005
- Sat 6 Feb EDINBURGH: St Paul & St George's Church, York Place. 1.30pm: meeting begins. 4.30pm: evening prayer. Gordon Collins 031-334-8477

#### Wales

- Sun 31 Jan SWANSEA: 1pm: shared lunch, 2pm: afternoon activities, 4.30pm: evening prayer. Llangyfelach Church, 1 min from junction 46 of the M4 along B4489 to Swansea. Lionel Hopkins (0792) 74120

#### North-East

- Wed 3 Feb LEEDS: 7.30pm Trinity United Church, corner of Roundhay Rd and Beestead Terrace, LS8. Bernadette Kehoe (0532) 455842
- Sun 7 Feb CONSETT: Christ Church, Parliament St (near the Job Centre). 12 noon onwards: arrivals and midday prayer. 1pm: shared lunch, 2pm: afternoon activities. 4.30pm: evening prayer at St Patrick's Church Hall, Victoria Rd. Stephen Willey (0207) 592110
- Mon 8 Feb STOCKTON-ON-TEES: 7.30pm St Mark's Church, Trenchard Ave, Thornaby. Keith Tulloch (0642) 240514
- Tue 9 Feb HULL: 7.30pm Endsleigh Convent, Beverley Rd (just past the Hayworth Arms on the left on the way to Beverley). William Clemmey (0401) 51103, Sister Mary Teresa (0482) 42779.
- Tue 16 Feb SHEFFIELD: 7.30pm St Matthew's Church, Carver Street. Mark Donnelly (0742) 661570

#### North-West

- Mon 1 Feb LIVERPOOL: 6.00pm: prayer around the cross at the Sisters of Charity, 55 Seal St, L1, and "Walk of Witness" to Pierhead. 7.00pm: main gather-

ing and evening prayer at St Nicholas' Church, Pierhead. Helen McGowan 051-263-3106

- Sat 13 Feb MANCHESTER: 11.30am: midday prayer followed by shared lunch and afternoon activities at St Cuthbert's Church, Oldham Rd (Miles Plattin 4.00pm: evening prayer at St Michael's Church, George Leigh St, Ancoats (behind Daily Express building). Alan Lewis, Susan Rattenbury and Moxham 061-225-1872
- Sun 14 Feb BLACKPOOL: 3.30pm: meeting begins at Victoria Congregational Church, Newton Drive. 6.30pm: shared tea/supper. 7.30pm: evening prayer at St Kentigern's Church, Newton Drive. Julie Tomlinson (0253) 48267
- Mon 15 Feb KENDAL: Friends Meeting House, Stramontgate: 6.30pm: supper provided (please ring in advance), 7.30pm: meeting begins. 8.30pm: evening prayer at Holy Trinity & St George's Church, N. Road. Thomas Clough and Jan Royan (0539) 8212

#### Midlands

- Tue 2 Feb NOTTINGHAM: 7.30pm St Mary's Church, High Pavement (city-centre). Sue Cummins (0602) 417156
- Sat 20 Feb BIRMINGHAM: Sparkhill Methodist Church, corner of Warwick Rd and Medicott Rd, BE1 1pm onwards: arrivals and tea and coffee (bring lunch if you wish). 2pm: meeting begins. 4pm: shared lunch and sandwiches. 5pm: evening prayer. R.R. Thompson 021-773-7061 and Stephen Fletcher 021-507-0012
- Sun 21 Feb MILTON KEYNES: 12.30pm: shared lunch, 1.30pm: afternoon activities, 4.30pm: evening prayer. The Cross and Stable, Downs Barn Boulevard, Downs Barn, Central/North MK. Penny Curtis (0906) 661346

#### South-East

- Fri 29 Jan BRENTWOOD: 7.30pm St Thomas' Church, St Thomas' Rd. Margaret Magennis (033) 390533
- Sat 30 Jan LONDON: 12.30pm: shared lunch, 1.30pm: afternoon activities, 4.30pm: evening prayer at St Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square. Philip Chatter 01-930-0089 or 5009
- Wed 10 Feb CAMBRIDGE: 7.30pm St Michael's Hall, Trinity Street. Charles Hedley (0223) 334922 (messages only) 334900
- Thu 11 Feb CANTERBURY: 7.30pm Christ Church, College of Education, North Holmes Road. Carol Hawes, c/o (0233) 27117, or Peter Ball (0227) 6028
- Fri 12 Feb PORTSMOUTH: 7.30pm St Faith's Church, Fyning St (off St John's Rd), Landport. Christopher Chesson (0705) 826892

#### South-West

- Thu 18 Feb PLYMOUTH: 7.30pm St Peter's Church, Wyndham Square. Paul and Sandra Bentley (0792) 41888 (meal provided elsewhere at 6.00pm: phone in advance)
- Fri 19 Feb BRISTOL: 7.30pm Salvation Army Citadel, Ashley Rd (Stokes Croft end), St Pauls. Steffen Byford (0272) 423333

## Letter from Taizé

### Annual subscription (1987)

- Ordinary subscription:  
France 25 FF  
Other countries 35 FF
- Supporting subscription: 50 or 100 FF
- Airmail subscription: (outside Europe only) 45 FF

#### means of payment:

- by credit card (Visa, Mastercard, Eurocard, Carte Bleue): send to Taizé the number of your card, its date of validity, and say what sum in *French Francs* you wish to transfer.
- by international Giro transfer, in *French Francs*, addressed to: Lettre de Taizé, CCP 20041-0100 0061446M038-71 or CCP LYON 614 46 M.
- by cheque in *French Francs* to "Lettre de Taizé, 712 CLUNY" made payable through "Société Générale" (Eurocheques in *French Francs* accepted).
- In West Germany, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Finland, India, Ireland, Italy, New Zealand, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UK and USA it is possible to pay the subscription within the country. Write to Taizé to ask for the address in your country.

#### Correspondence:

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